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‘To give an outsider an idea of what it could be like’: A case study of the creative representation of hearing voices

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Abstract

This paper reports on a case study which aims to recreate the hearing voices symptom in schizophrenia. The case study was submitted for a co-curricular module at King’s College London by a first year undergraduate Music student, Bethany James, and was created using the web application, Mahara. The core of the case study consists of a soundscape of both everyday and unusual sounds, in conjunction with an original musical composition. The paper describes the case study and discusses it using chaos narrative as an analytical lens. The paper argues that the case study (‘A Beautiful Mind – Artefact’) effectively evokes the hearing voices symptom, conveying a lucid sense of the experience to non-sufferers and thus potentially creating use value for clinicians and care workers.

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Keywords

Hearing voices, Chaos narrative, schizophrenia, Mahara, web applications, soundscape

Introduction

This article comprises an examination of a case study of a piece of work submitted for a co-curricular, interdisciplinary module at King's College London in 2014 by a first year undergraduate Music student, Bethany James. The case study comprises a creative representation of hearing voices as a schizophrenic symptom and was submitted for the interdisciplinary module, 'A Beautiful Mind.' The case study is of interest because it describes and analyses a complex medical condition through a musical composition and soundscape. Furthermore, the case study has the potential to illuminate the condition for non-sufferers, thus potentially providing use value in clinical or care settings, and closing the gap between those who experience hearing voices and those who support the voice hearers. Moreover, the case study's focus on a musical composition and soundscape shows how creative work can potentially further understanding by recreating the sense of a complex and, at its most severe, unrelenting mental illness. Charon and DasGupta (2011: ix) write, 'we set to work trying to design ways of training doctors, nurses, social workers and therapists how to approach, elicit, interpret, and act on stories' and the case study may have use value by providing an evocative story with considerable verisimilitude, potentially supporting health care professionals.

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The article begins by outlining the background of a department at King's College London, King's Experience, set up to develop and support co-curricular learning. The article then looks at one of many co-curricular learning opportunities at King's College London, the King's Experience Interdisciplinary Award, then at a module that leads to the Award, 'A Beautiful Mind,' and at the evolution of the module as it has developed into an opportunity to undertake creative work underpinned by questions of mental health and mental illness. Subsequently, the article focuses on its case study, namely a piece of work submitted for 'A Beautiful Mind.' The work is described and then discussed; its form, structure and content are considered in relation to chaos narrative (Frank, 2013). Finally, conclusions are drawn about the work, about the possibility for future work in this area, about how the work might further our understanding and about how it might potentially enhance intervention.

Background

King's Experience is a department at King's College London offering co-curricular learning opportunities. Co-curricular learning refers to learning which is outside the formal curriculum, but which is closer to the curriculum than extra-curricular activity, in the sense that it is more explicitly about learning.

Co-curricular learning has become an established feature of the UK higher education landscape in recent years; a Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) report of

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December 2013 showed that 75% of the responding Higher Education Institutions offered learning outside the formal curriculum, with a further 16% planning to do so (QAA, 2013: 1).

Students on King's Experience modules undertake experiential or additional classroom learning and submit an assessed piece of work, often informed by established pedagogical approaches, most notably reflective learning (Schon, 1983).

The King's Experience Department

Since it became operational at the start of the 2013-14 academic year, King's Experience (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/ke/index.aspx>) has created a wide range of learning opportunities for students: the King's Experience Global Award, the King's Experience London Award, the King's Experience Interdisciplinary Award, the King's Experience Enterprise Award, the King's Experience Research Award and the Principal's Global Leadership Award. King's Experience also oversees King's Undergraduate Research Fellowships, which enable students to work alongside academics over the summer break, and the Student Opportunity Fund, which supports individual and collaborative learning opportunities organised by students.

In its first operational year, 320 students undertook King's Experience awards. This figure rose to 536 in 2014-15, and 749 in 2015-16. It is anticipated that 1,000 students per year will be taking the awards by 2018. King's Profile 2016 shows that there were 27,629 students at King's, of whom 17,135 were undergraduates (King's College London, 2016).

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As well as providing learning opportunities, King's Experience provides an academic practice opportunity to postgraduate researchers. Assessments for King's Experience awards are blind double-marked by postgraduate researchers, who are paid and receive an induction. Selected third marking is undertaken by academic staff and all the results are ratified at an exam board featuring a professor from another university as external examiner. Successful completion of King's Experience awards features on undergraduate students' Higher Education Achievement Records, the official transcript of their achievements at university.

The King's Experience Interdisciplinary Award

The King's Experience Interdisciplinary Award became operational at the start of the 2013-14 academic year. There are two, alternative routes to the King's Experience Interdisciplinary Award. The first module, 'Thinking Creativity,' ran from 2013-14 to 2015-16 inclusive and was designed and run by postgraduate researchers at the department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries. 'Thinking Creativity' involved looking at creativity from a range of disciplinary perspectives. The second module, 'A Beautiful Mind,' was designed and is run by staff at King's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience; the module's area of interest is the intersections between the creative arts, mental health and mental illness through the diverse perspectives offered by distinct disciplines within social sciences and the humanities. Thirty-six students took 'A Beautiful Mind' in 2013-14. This figure rose to 59 in 2014-15, and to 96 in 2015-16. 'A Beautiful Mind' is ongoing and an established feature of King's Experience's co-curricular provision.

‘A Beautiful Mind’

‘A Beautiful Mind’ is a non-credit bearing module. It is equivalent to 7.5 academic credits (75hrs learning) at level four in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA, 2008). ‘A Beautiful Mind’ aims to develop students’ understanding of the links between mental health issues and disciplines within the sciences and the arts and also aims to encourage engagement in and stimulate debate and creativity. In addition, ‘A Beautiful Mind’ aims to develop students’ creativity and research skills by providing a context which encourages innovative connections and outputs.

The original, intended learning outcomes for ‘A Beautiful Mind,’ which were in place when the case study was submitted, were as follows:

- Gain insights into the links between mental illness and disciplines within the arts and sciences and develop knowledge in this area of study.
- Develop the ability to present, evaluate and interpret information, in order to build lines of argument.
- Make critical use of research, synthesising and analytical skills in order to appraise existing research and design future studies.
- Gain insight into study approaches from across a range of disciplines and perspectives, as part of the module’s emphasis on interdisciplinarity.
- Use the learning undertaken to contribute to personal and professional development.

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However, from the first iteration of the module, which runs once per academic year, it became clear that students were taking the opportunities the module provided to produce creative rather than traditionally academic work; in practice, the number of academic essays submitted was far outweighed by the range of creative work, including visual art and creative writing. Consequently, the intended learning outcomes for ‘A Beautiful Mind’ have been amended to reflect how the module is engaged with in practice by students.

The revised, intended learning outcomes, being implemented from the 2016-17 academic year, are as follows:

- Gain insights into the links between mental illness and disciplines within the arts and sciences and develop knowledge in this area of study.
- Gain insight into study approaches from across a range of disciplines and perspectives, as part of the module’s emphasis on interdisciplinarity.
- Apply knowledge and understanding gained in the module to underpin creative, academic or reflective work.
- Communicate the results of their studies in structured and coherent ways.
- Use the learning undertaken to contribute to their own personal and professional development.

The new, third learning outcome stresses and validates the option of submitting creative work. In instances when students submit an artefact for the module, such as painting, sculpture or video, they are also asked to submit a project report of 500-1,000 words,

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reflecting on and explicating their work. This was not necessary for the case study, which provided text, as well as sound and a painting.

Case study

The case study in this paper is an exploration and representation of the hearing voices symptom in schizophrenia. It focuses on hearing voices as a symptom of schizophrenia rather than hearing voices per se, a relevant if complex distinction in the context of the emergence of the Hearing Voices Movement (HVM) (Woods, 2013), which eschews the pathologization of hearing voices and, instead, views voice hearing as a legitimate experience, requiring understanding and empathy rather than clinical categorization, though the distinction between hearing voices as an experience and hearing voices as a symptom of illness is itself problematic (Blackman, 2001). While it is acknowledged that the HVM incorporates the Humanities (Blackman, 2016: 257) and advocates interdisciplinary collaboration (Corstens et al., 2014) and is thus relevant to a creative work focused on hearing voices, the inspiration for the case study was a painting from c.1987 by a diagnosed schizophrenic. The case study is thus rooted in an acceptance of schizophrenia as a clinical condition, admittedly a simplification in view of the contested nature of schizophrenia (Boyle, 2002), but it was not part of the case study's aim to interrogate schizophrenia as a category, rather to evoke an aspect of its symptoms for outsiders.

The case study was produced on the Mahara web application. Mahara is an e-portfolio system. Users can store a range of digital artefacts on Mahara, including text, audio and video files. It describes itself as, 'a fully featured web application to build your electronic portfolio.

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You can create journals, upload files, embed social media resources from the web and collaborate with other users in groups' (Mahara.org, 2016). Mahara has a social networking facility, too, as other users can see the sources collated by the primary user, as long as that user has given permission to view the selected artefacts. Mahara has had limited applications in higher education to date, though it has been used to produce professional portfolios for higher education lecturers in a study by Winberg and Pallitt (2016), who noted that e-portfolios can encourage reflective practice.

Mahara is organised into a series of pages. The pages are accessed via tabs on a home page. The screenshot below, taken from the case study, indicates the tabs feature of Mahara:

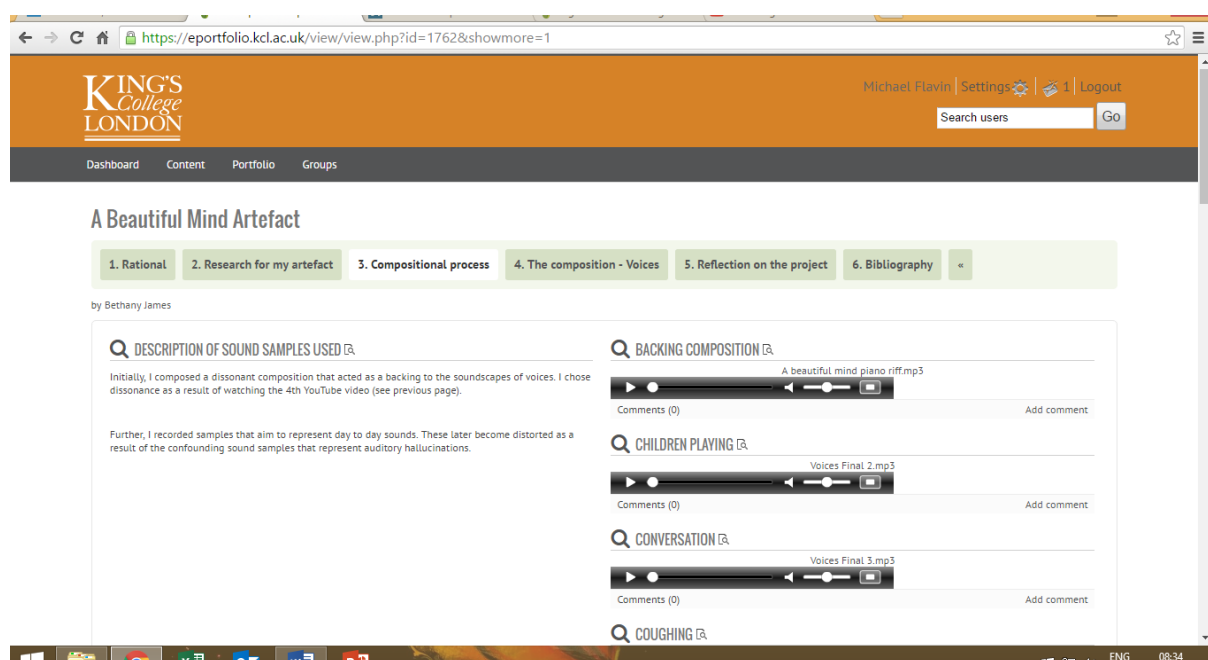


Figure 1. Screenshot showing different tabs on the case study on Mahara.

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The student, Bethany James, created the following tabs for her work: Rationale; Artefact Research; Compositional Process; The Composition – Voices; Reflection; Bibliography. In this sense there were conventional, academic aspects to the work, including outlining the reason for the project; undertaking a review (mainly of YouTube videos of sufferers); presenting a methodology for the audio files collated and music composed; a reflective, evaluative section; and a bibliography.

James populated each tab as follows: the rationale

(<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=574>) laid out the inspiration for the work, namely, a lecture from ‘A Beautiful Mind’ titled, ‘Seeing Voices: Using Art and Science to Understand Psychotic Experience’ (Elliot and Shergill, 2014). The particular work from the lecture that had inspired James was Bryan Charnley’s ‘To The Farm’ (c.1987), which, ‘expresses the internal and personal nature of hearing voices. Through showing the complex variety of things dominating his mind, such as bugs and ears with mouths, Charnley is able to represent how these hallucinations can take over’ (James, 2014). Charnley (1949-1991) was ‘an artist whose work vividly portrays the effects of schizophrenia’ (Charnley, 2016). Hur et al. (2014: 63), in a meta-analysis of self-awareness in schizophrenia, comment, of Charnley’s self-portraits, ‘it is as if he was an objective observer dissecting his inner self.’ Charnley’s ‘To The Farm’ is shown below:



Figure 2. ‘To the Farm’ (c.1987), by Bryan Charnley (1949-1991), © Bethlem Museum of the Mind / The Estate of Bryan Charnley.

The next tab in the case study, under the heading, ‘Artefact Research’ (<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=575>) comprises a set of videos from sources including YouTube and TED.com, featuring schizophrenia sufferers recounting their experiences of the disease, focusing on voice hearing. James prefaces the videos with the following text: ‘After generating initial ideas, I began to look at several case studies of people with schizophrenia who experience auditory hallucinations. The majority of this research is taken from YouTube. I purposefully avoided journals and academic writing. My aim was to understand what it is actually like for the people hearing the voices. The majority of journals have been written from an outsider’s perspective and therefore lack validity in explaining the experience of an auditory hallucination’ (James, 2014). Schizophrenia is often associated

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with creativity (Becker, 2000-2001), but this case study reverses the association by constructing a creative representation of schizophrenia. James is not and never has been a sufferer. Through her composition, James immerses herself in recreating the experience of the hearing voices symptom in schizophrenia, without an explicit, mediating clinical layer. However, through evoking the symptom she may be creating use value for clinicians and care workers, to convey a sense of what the experience is like. James did not focus on sources contesting the pathologization of schizophrenia, a methodological approach that shaped and limited her exploration of the experience, though it was not an aim of the case study to challenge the category, but to evoke a sense of the specific symptom.

The third tab, under the heading, 'Compositional Process'

(<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=576>) comprises 20 audio recordings, prefaced by a commentary:

Initially, I composed a dissonant composition that acted as
a backing to the soundscapes of voices...

Further, I recorded samples that aim to represent day-to-day sounds. These later become distorted as a result of the confounding sound samples that represent auditory hallucinations.

The following samples represent auditory hallucinations.

All of these samples either represent aspects of

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hallucinations described in the YouTube videos or are inspired by Bryan Charnley's painting such as the bug sound sample. (James, 2014)

The individual audio files include 'Walking into lift,' 'Road works,' 'Walking on Tube platform' and 'Chair moving across floor.' The user can play any file individually, or any number of files simultaneously. One file features a female voice laughing and saying 'Geek.' A further file consists of a male with an American accent saying, 'Retarded bitch.' The 'Bug Sounds' recording features high pitched, dissonant sounds of insects. The tab also includes a dissonant backing music composition by James. The overall effect of engaging with this tab can be disturbing to the user, mixing incongruous sounds and thus generating a creative representation of what the experience of hearing voices is like.

The fourth tab is titled, 'The Composition – Voices'

(<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=577>). The tab is shown below.

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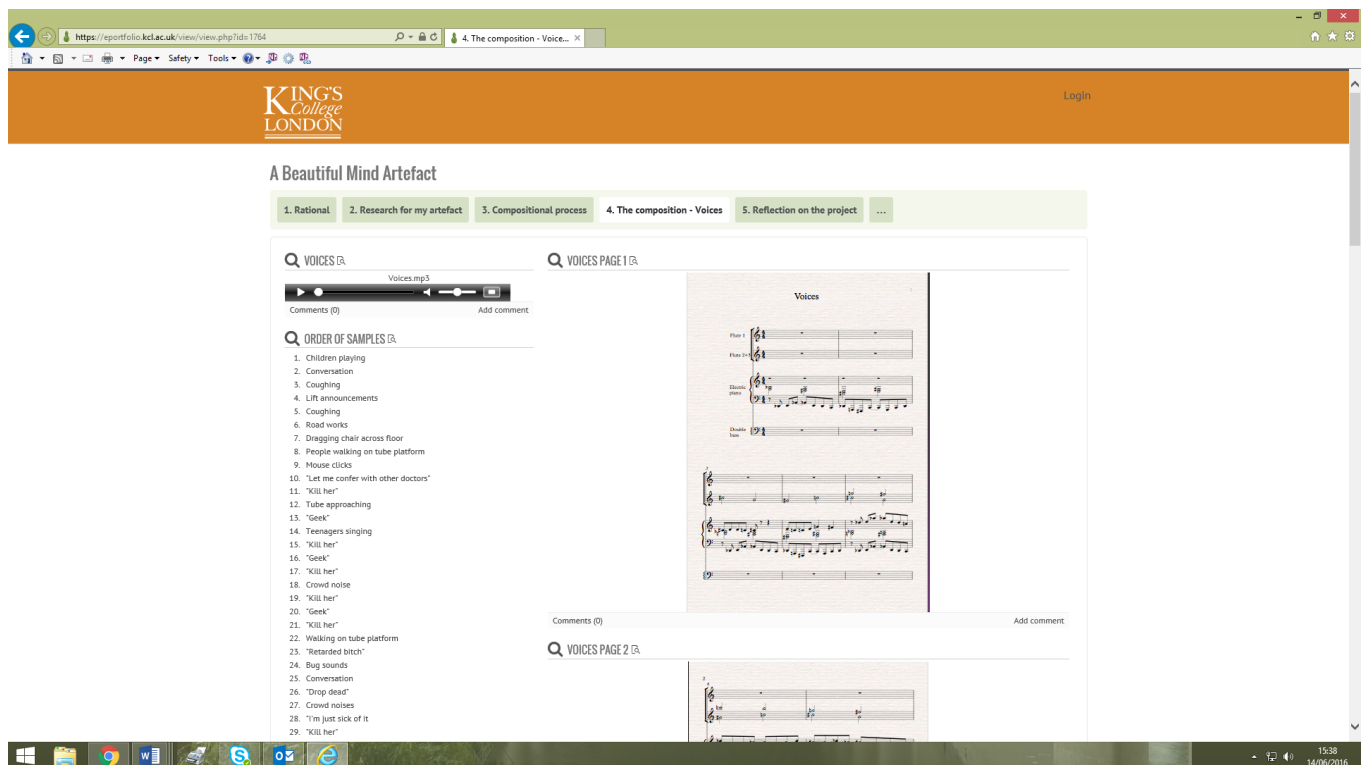


Figure 3. Screenshot, 'The Composition – Voices' (James, 2014)

For the composition, the samples are played in sequence rather than together, but the ongoing dissonant backing music in conjunction with the sequence of audio files creates a sinister, haunting feel. The original music is also featured as a music tab with conventional notation.

The fifth tab is called, 'Reflection' (<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=578>). James writes:

The overall aim of this composition was to trigger the listener's interest into auditory hallucinations – what do

sufferers of auditory hallucinations actually hear? After completing my composition and listening to it for the first time, it proved difficult to distinguish between the day-to-day sounds and the sounds that were included to reflect hallucinations. Following this result, I attempted to make a clearer sonic distinction by having the day-to-day sounds at a quieter volume than the hallucinatory sounds.

However, evidence from the YouTube videos suggests that people who suffer from hallucinations are quite often unable to distinguish between what is real and what is in their mind. My revised version, with an intentional attempt to separate the hallucinatory from the day-to-day, became far removed from what an actual sufferer of hallucinations may experience. As a result of this, I reverted to the more abstract version of my composition. One could argue that the challenge to separate the real sounds and the hallucinatory sounds in the composition reflects the difficulty people with schizophrenia have on a daily basis.

(James, 2014)

James's commentary demonstrates reflective learning (Schon, 1983), as it shows a willingness to revisit practice in the light of experience and reflection. It is also significant that James practises reflection in relation to creative work, which, in the act of creation, can feel spontaneous rather than constructed and mediated; Guillaumier (2016: 355) examines reflection in creative subjects (especially music), arguing reflection is 'an indispensable skill

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enabling students to make new connections.’ Guillaumier (2016: 355) also refers to an ‘experimental space in the curriculum’ which is what the module, ‘A Beautiful Mind’ provides, being set apart from the formal curriculum and offered as a distinct though complementary learning opportunity, encouraging experimentation and prompting reflection on the creative and learning process. Furthermore, James’s analysis shows how the work developed in practice, as the distinctions between everyday sounds and the experience of hearing voices become blurred, thus creating an enhanced recreation of the experience of the condition.

James’s final tab comprises a bibliography

(<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=579&showmore=1>), listing the text and video sources, as well as the original lecture from ‘A Beautiful Mind’ that inspired the work. The work as a whole is polyvocal, containing contributions from schizophrenia sufferers, audio recordings producing a soundscape and an original musical composition.

The assessors’ comments on the work highlight its strengths. The first assessor writes, ‘an extremely thought provoking, well researched piece of work, which highlighted how auditory hallucinations are experienced on a subjective level by those who suffer from schizophrenia. This theme was articulated in a very innovative way through a musical composition which highlighted the abstract and fragmented nature of these hallucinations... There was a clear reference made to Shergill and Elliot’s lecture on “Seeing voices: Using Art and Science to Understand Psychotic Experience,” which was explored in an innovative way. Very well done.’ The second assessor wrote: ‘The way in which you use the functionality of Mahara to explain your thought process is very impressive; it effectively shows how you moved from

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the initial stimulus of the Shergill and Elliott lecture to develop independent thinking. Did you find it helpful as a tool in structuring and thinking through your project, I wonder? Well done – you successfully made me think about this subject in an entirely different way!’ (Anonymous, 2014). It is noteworthy that neither assessor refers explicitly to the learning outcomes, despite the outcomes featuring prominently in the compulsory induction session for the assessors. It appeared that, from the module’s first iteration, the work being produced was exceeding the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum was stimulating, but the learning outcomes limiting. Practice by students directed the module into a new, distinct and experimental space, and assessors were responding to how the module was being engaged with in practice.

The case study exemplifies the evolving identity of ‘A Beautiful Mind’ since its inception in 2013-14, an identity which has been determined by practice rather than design. The original learning outcomes were distinctly academic, but students built upon the lectures to produce creative work; individual classes over three years of the module to date have examined subjects such as the poetry of Sylvia Plath, the photography of Eti Wade, or the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. An interesting feature of ‘A Beautiful Mind,’ therefore, is that its purpose has arisen more from practice than design; the module as intended has differed from the module in practice. The students have, collectively though not consciously, repurposed the module, steering it more towards the creative than the traditionally academic.

In 2016, the author and Bethany James had a conversation, reflecting on the case study from a position of greater distance (James, 2016, personal communication). James spoke of the initial inspiration she drew from ‘To The Farm’; ‘I thought of loads of things musically that

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could be done from that.’ She did not explore this thought further, but it was interesting to see the synaesthesia, as James drew inspiration from painting, articulating that inspiration through her own undergraduate discipline of music.

James also spoke of the original composition she wrote and used as a backing track. She described it as ‘haunting’ and ‘unrelenting,’ as she took, ‘a sample of two different phrases and kept repeating them,’ to convey a sense of the lack of respite for sufferers, typical of a chaos narrative. She was also conscious of her status as an outsider to schizophrenia and mental health problems: ‘I haven’t suffered from any mental illness. So to then jump on and create a composition, being “I know exactly how it is,” that’s what worried me,’ but the lectures on the ‘A Beautiful Mind’ module had inspired James to believe she could evoke the experience of hearing voices creatively and effectively, and thus her overall aim was, ‘To give an outsider an idea of what it could be like.’ It is noteworthy that James is conscious of issues of responsibility and authenticity in recreating the hearing voices symptom in schizophrenia. It is recognised that the case study is a creative reworking; James aimed for verisimilitude but recognised her limitations as a non-sufferer. James faced the ethical challenge of creating a chaos narrative. The work she submitted, however, draws attention to its own artifice through its choice of the medium of a web application, which, paradoxically, demarcates chaos and offers a chaos narrative in a potentially orderly sequence. There is no suggestion that James attempts to pass herself off as someone who has had the experience of hearing voices.

The full work, Bethany James’s ‘A Beautiful Mind – Artefact,’ can be found here:

<http://hern.org.uk/mahara/view/view.php?id=574&showmore=1>.

Discussion

Frank (2013: 97) defines chaos narrative: 'its plot imagines life never getting better.' Chaos stories expose 'vulnerability, futility, and impotence.' Frank (2015: 213) adds, 'People who are living in chaos experience others coming at them, pressing in on them with demands that seem threatening.' These themes are present in 'A Beautiful Mind – Artefact.' From Charnley's 'To The Farm;' to the video recordings of schizophrenia sufferers; to the samples of sounds including abuse, threats and distorted bug sounds; to James's musical composition with its relentless repetition of two phrases, overlaid with a complex soundscape; the disease is conveyed as being intractable, the sufferer helpless.

A tension within the chaos narrative is that 'words necessarily fail' (Frank, 2013: 98). James circumvents this problem by using a combination of her composition and a soundscape, evoking the symptom without offering a resolution. To develop this point, Frank (2013: 101) writes, 'the chaos narrative is always beyond speech, and thus it is what is always lacking in speech.' James responds, albeit not consciously, to chaos narrative by moving beyond speech and beyond the original inspiration for her work (a painting). Her work can be seen as the search for a medium to articulate her thoughts and as her response to the original 'A Beautiful Mind' lecture. As a music undergraduate she has an existing creative language, and skill therein, to create her representation.

However, the relationship between 'A Beautiful Mind – Artefact' and chaos narrative is complex. Frank (2013: 105) writes: 'where life can be given narrative order, chaos is already at bay. In stories told out of the deepest chaos, no sense of sequencing redeems suffering as

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orderly.’ A sense of sequencing is what James achieves through the use of the Mahara web application and its tab features. The sequencing does not lead to a sense of the suffering itself being orderly, but it does contextualise the suffering through the representation of other sufferers and through the demarcation between the different elements of the work. The experience of hearing voices is not articulated in a conventional, linear narrative, but there is sufficient explication and structure to convey a sense of what the condition might be like for a sufferer. Moreover, James’s representation is of a type which makes the hearing voices symptom intelligible to the non-sufferer. By contextualising chaos, and in addition to the intrinsic interest of the work, James may be creating use value, supporting clinical and care work through, in effect, an act of translation and evocation.

There is therefore a paradox in the case study, in the sense that the medium, Mahara, enables an ordered, if not necessarily linear, representation of a chaotic experience (the hearing voices symptom in schizophrenia). Furthermore, each user’s experience of ‘A Beautiful Mind – Artefact’ can be different, depending on how they use the tabs and how they use the resources within each tab. The fourth tab provides the overall work as James intended, but users can create their own experience of ‘A Beautiful Mind -Artefact.’ The user is thus active in the re-creation of the work. James sets the parameters but does not control the user’s experience.

The tabs on Mahara allow for a representation of the hearing voices symptom, but they also allow for the creative, academic and compositional framing of the re-creation, and for reflection on the creative process, and for a demonstration of the academic underpinning through the bibliography. The case study is a chaos narrative in terms of core content, but

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order is created through the Mahara web application, and order and chaos are mixed in the original musical composition. Moreover, the dissonant composition underpins the voices, unsettling the user.

James's 'A Beautiful Mind – Artefact' is distanced rather than ethnographic because of the layer of mediation in the form of a web application. The use of Mahara enables a system of classification which is not diagnostic of the hearing voices symptom in schizophrenia, but is instead a means of recreating or representing the incremental process of producing a creative work, as the original inspiration is gestated, researched, reworked and reflected upon.

Reflection is built into James's chosen mode of representation.

'A Beautiful Mind – Artefact' is innovative because it demonstrates an eclecticism not associated with traditional academic submissions. James combines visual art, YouTube and Ted.com videos, audio recordings and an original musical composition. 'A Beautiful Mind – Artefact' is also polyvocal, because of its mixture of visual and auditory (and textual) elements, and because different sources are deployed, yet a coherent, creative whole is produced.

Conclusion

In 'A Beautiful Mind – Artefact,' James gives literal voice to mental illness in a narrative which is paradoxically both chaotic and ordered. She brings form and structure to chaos narrative, which generically resists easily recognisable form and structure. James has

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produced a complex work, moving from the visual to the auditory, building from a painting in order to construct a musical composition and soundscape.

A key achievement of the work is that it manages to be both linear and non-linear. ‘A Beautiful Mind – Artefact’ brings order to chaos through the medium and the way it uses the medium to foreground form and structure, divesting the chaos narrative of its chaos, leaving a representation of chaos, but within coherent, formal boundaries.

In terms of future research possibilities, more case studies might be undertaken where web applications have been used to reproduce an experience of illness, or the tensions implicit in voicing chaos narratives through web applications might be explored on a formal and structural level. The case study might also prompt further interest in the HVM, given how the HVM draws in work in the Humanities as well as clinical and social analyses, to articulate and legitimise the experience of hearing voices.

Bethany James summarises her essential aim in creating the work in the first place: ‘There are all these different sounds, and that some of these sounds are not actually coming from the outside world, not coming from the soundscape around you’ (James, 2016, personal communication). She is successful in re-creating the hearing voices symptom, creating a work which both explicates and haunts. Frank (2013: 109) argues, ‘the need to honor chaos stories is both moral and clinical’ and James succeeds in managing her subject matter responsibly while also providing potential use value to clinicians and care workers by illuminating the hearing voices symptom and thus drawing the user closer to the community of sufferers, while at the same time producing work with intrinsic merit and interest. Frank

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(2015: 219) argues, ‘living in chaos makes it difficult to communicate’, but ‘A Beautiful Mind – Artefact’ communicates lucidly.

Endnote: At the time the case study was produced (2014) the author, Bethany James, had not been aware of the HVM. However, subsequent work by the HVM has raised interesting questions regarding the experience of hearing voices, questions which are relevant to this paper; for example, the question of whether hearing voices needs to be pathologized or can be understood as an experience requiring understanding, not necessarily signifying mental illness.

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